

# SECRETARY'S RECORD, PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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## BEFORE THE NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Nebraska )      Application No. 911-076  
Public Service Commission, on )      /PI-249  
its own motion, conducting an )  
investigation into the 911 )  
service outage that began on )      ORDER OPENING INVESTIGATION  
September 2, 2023 in areas of )  
Nebraska served by Windstream )  
and its affiliates. )      Entered: September 12, 2023

BY THE COMMISSION:

### O P I N I O N S   A N D   F I N D I N G S

The Nebraska Public Service Commission ("Commission") opens the above-captioned investigation into a multi-hour disruption of 911 service in southeast Nebraska that resulted from a system-wide telecommunications outage experienced by Windstream customers during Saturday, September 2, 2023 and Sunday, September 3, 2023. Based upon preliminary information and press reports, it appears that a fire at a Windstream facility in Lincoln, combined with the failure of a backup generator and the depletion of backup batteries serving the same facility, led to a shutdown of Windstream service, including 911 service, to Windstream customers in southeast Nebraska for a period of several hours. During the outage, calls to 911 call centers (also known as public safety answering points or "PSAPs") in the affected area were delivered either sporadically or not at all.<sup>1</sup>

Commission staff has preliminarily determined that at least 18 of the 20 PSAPs connected to the Windstream system experienced a disruption to 911 service as a result of the outage. For some PSAPs, both 911 calls and admin lines were affected. For other PSAPs, the outage affected only calls to 911 and not calls to admin lines, or vice versa.

Accordingly, the Commission opens this investigation to determine the cause or causes of this disruption to 911 service,

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<sup>1</sup> The outage addressed by the investigation in this Docket appears to be unrelated to a separate outage that occurred on August 31, 2023 to September 1, 2023 and disrupted 911 service in areas of Nebraska where Lumen is the 911 service provider ("Lumen Outage."). The Commission is conducting an investigation into the Lumen Outage under a separate docket. *See, In the Matter of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, on its own motion, conducting an investigation into the 911 service outage that began on August 31, 2023 in areas of Nebraska served by Lumen and its affiliates, App. No. 911-075/PI-248, Order Opening Investigation (Sept. 12, 2023).*

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including, without limitation, an evaluation of all aspects of the 911 system that were impacted, in order to ascertain what the actions may be warranted by the Commission to respond to this incident and prevent future such occurrences.

One aspect of this inquiry will be to determine why a fire and loss of electrical power at a single Windstream facility resulted in a loss of 911 service to a large portion of southeast Nebraska. 911 service providers are required to maintain geographically diverse redundant connections between PSAPs and the telecommunications infrastructure that delivers 911 calls to their intended destinations.<sup>2</sup> The Commission seeks both an explanation of why the redundancy required of Windstream failed in this instance and a solution to prevent this from happening again.

Among other things, the Commission will also seek to determine whether PSAPs and other Windstream customers received timely notification of the 911 service disruption from responsible parties.<sup>3</sup> However, none of the above examples should be deemed to be a limitation on the scope of this inquiry. The Commission reserves the right to follow this investigation wherever it leads.

## O R D E R

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED by the Nebraska Public Service Commission that the above-captioned investigation be, and hereby is, opened.

ENTERED AND MADE EFFECTIVE at Lincoln, Nebraska, this 12th day of September, 2023.

NEBRASKA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS CONCURRING:

  
Eric M. Hamler

  
  
Kevin Stocker



Chair

ATTEST:

  
Thomas W. Golden  
Executive Director

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., 47 C.F.R. § 9.19.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., 47 C.F.R. § 4.9.